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Chayote With Dried Green Chile

by FELICIA COCOTZIN RUIZ NOV 23, 2020

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The first time I saw a chayote plant I was taken by its vine and tendrils. The vine had to be more than 30 feet from the base of the plant, with its tendrils latching on to a nearby tree growing it's pear-shaped fruit. The tendrils, which resembled a 70's telephone cord, made me think of an umbilical cord – an umbilical cord reaching back to my Mexican side, before colonization. This ancestral fruit, whose leaves, skin, flesh, seeds, and roots, has been used as food and medicine on my Mexican side since before the conquest, spread throughout the world – going by various names such as mirliton and christophene. However, I know it as *chayohtli*, the Nahuatl name for this plant which is eaten as a vegetable.

Related to the squash family, it is very mild and will pick up all of the flavors of the kitchen pot. So, because my family is from Northern New Mexico, I decided to pair it up with some delicious New Mexican green chile to honor my ancestors on that side. If you cannot find chayote, you can easily substitute zucchini, and, thankfully, many New Mexican purveyors are now selling dried New Mexican green chile powder online.

Pro tip: If you've never cooked with chayote before, know that it exudes a sticky sap once peeled. Some people notice a minor skin reaction; when the sap comes in contact with your hands, it sometimes hardens into a white film. (Remember letting glue dry on your hands as a kid, and then peeling it off? It's kinda like that.) To avoid this sticky situation, use gloves when handling raw chayote. Or, if you go gloveless, soak your hands in soapy water for 5 minutes after cutting the chayote, then gently scrub your hands with a soapy sponge to remove any residue.

Made this? Let us know how it went in the comment section below!

YIELDS:	PREP TIME:	TOTAL TIME:
4 SERVINGS	0 HOURS 10 MINS	0 HOURS 40 MINS

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

2 lb. chayote, peeled, halved, seeded, and cut into 1" chunks

1 small onion, peeled and chopped

3 large garlic cloves, chopped

1/2 tbsp. (or more) New Mexico dried green chile powder, mild or hot

1 tsp. Mexico oregano

1 tbsp. tomato paste

1 1/2 c. low-sodium vegetable broth, plus more if needed

1 tsp. sea salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Warm olive oil in a large skillet over a medium heat. Add chayote, onion, and garlic. Sauté, stirring often, until chayote and onions are semi-tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add tomato paste, Mexican oregano, green chile powder, vegetable stock, and sea salt. Stir, cover with lid or foil, and allow mixture to simmer on low for 20 to 30 minutes, or until chayote is cooked through but still firm, adding more broth if needed. Taste for seasoning, serve warm or at room temperature.

NICKY HEDAYATZADEH

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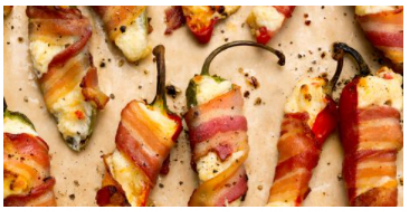

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